CIRM Review Panel Makes Recommendations for Distribution Of $262 Million to Build Research Facilities in California

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MILLBRAE, Calif., April 5, 2008 The Scientific and Medical Facilities Working Group (FWG) of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, after hearing extensive public discussion here yesterday and earlier today, made recommendations for the distribution of $262 million in stem cell research infrastructure funding made available through Proposition 71. These recommendations will be reviewed, potentially modified, and then approved by CIRM's board, the Independent Citizen's Oversight Committee (ICOC), at its meeting May 6 and 7.

If all 12 applicants complete the projects as proposed, using commitments of matching money and leveraged funds from donors and the institutions, the CIRM grants will result in more than $750 million in new research facilities, delivering a significant economic stimulus to several communities throughout the state. Investment in research infrastructure to extend California's state-of-the art research capacity is a critical part of CIRM's Scientific Strategic Plan to sustain and build California's global leadership in stem cell research.

"Progress in translating stem cell biology requires co-location of multidisciplinary teams combined with enormous technical resources," said Dr. Marie Csete, CIRM's Chief Scientific Officer. "This meeting was an important step toward building the optimal facilities for our scientists and will extend California's leadership in stem cell science."

The Major Facilities Grant program was launched in August 2007 as a two-part application process. In the fall, CIRM's Scientific and Medical Research Grants Working Group evaluated the scientific merit of 17 proposals submitted in response to the request for application. On January 16, 2008 the ICOC approved Part 1 of the applications, inviting 12 institutions to advance to the second and final part of the application process. Part 2 of the application focuses on the technical aspects of an applicant's building program and how the scientific program aligns with the CIRM's objectives, and why the program represents a good value for California taxpayers' investment. The review was conducted by the 10-member Scientific and Medical Research Facilities Working Group (Facilities Working Group) made up of real estate experts, patient advocates and the chairman of the ICOC. This meeting was open to the public.

Since April 2006 when the CIRM awarded its first scientific grants under the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative, the Institute has funded 156 grants totaling nearly $260 million for investigator-initiated research grants and training to 22 California non-profit and academic institutions. The first grants directed $37.5 million for training 169 pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, and clinical fellows at 16 non-profit and academic research institutions. In 2007 the ICOC approved 73 Leon J. Thal SEED Grants totaling more than $46 million to bring new ideas and new investigators into the field of human embryonic stem cell (hESC) research; 28 Comprehensive Research Grants totaling nearly $72 million to support mature, ongoing studies on hESCs by scientists with a record of accomplishment in the field; 17 Shared Research Laboratory Grants totaling more than $50 million; and 22 New Faculty Awards of more than $54 million to encourage the next generation of clinical and scientific leaders in stem cell research.

The table below details the amount of funding each applicant institution requested in CIRM funding, the FWG recommended amount, and the total project cost figuring in the amount each institution has committed to contribute to the project in matching and leverage funds: (Note: the recommended still exceed the $262 million available by $26 million and the difference will be addressed by the full ICOC at its May meeting.)

Application Number	Institution	Amount Requested	FWG Recommended Amount	Total Project cost
CIRM INSTITUTES (Grants of up to $50 million)				
FA1-00609-1	Stanford University	50,000,000	47,500,000	200,000,000
FA1-00607-1	San Diego Consortium for Regenerative Medicine	50,000,000	43,000,000	115,202,026
FA1-00618-1	University of California, San Francisco	40,000,000	38,000,000	94,514,740
FA1-00619-1	University of Southern California	35,000,000	29,400,000	82,610,000
FA1-00611-1	University of California, Davis	26,059,275	21,889,791	61,770,588
FA1-00612-1	University of California, Irvine	37,000,000	29,600,000	60,457,400
FA1-00613-1	University of California, Los Angeles	29,646,274	21,641,780	41,834,478
CIRM CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE (Grants of up to $25 million)				
FA1-00610-1	University of California, Berkeley	25,000,000	22,000,000	78,610,000
FA1-00600-1	Buck Institute for Age Research	25,000,000	20,500,000	70,080,747
CIRM SPECIAL PROGRAMS (Grants of up to $10 million)				
FA1-00617-1	University of California, Santa Cruz	8,665,000	7,191,950	12,896,500
FA1-00614-1	University of California, Merced	5,128,800	4,359,480	7,458,000
FA1-00616-1	University of California, Santa Barbara	4,722,000	3,494,280	6,352,400
TOTALS	ALL REQUESTS	336,221,349	288,577,281	831,786,879

Major Facilities Grants

The objectives of the CIRM Major Facilities Grant Program are:

- Funding new facilities - and encouraging investments by others in new facilities - that are free of any federal funding so as to allow research and development of therapies based on human embryonic stem cell (hESC) and other stem cell approaches to proceed in California without restrictions imposed by the federal government.
- Developing stem cell research centers that will expand research capacity and capabilities in California while bringing stem cell-related researchers together in a collaborative setting.
- Funding new facilities and improvements where research institutions have determined that existing facilities are inadequate or are lacking altogether and thus pose a challenge to the development of therapies and cures for diseases being addressed at these institutions.

The applications seek funding to establish one of three types of CIRM facilities:

CIRM Institutes to carry out stem cell research in three categories: basic and discovery stem cell research, preclinical (translational) research, and preclinical development and clinical research. CIRM funding for these projects will be up to $50 million.

CIRM Centers of Excellence to conduct stem cell research in any two of the three categories listed above. CIRM funding for these project will be up to $25 million.

CIRM Special Program to conduct specialized stem cell projects in one of the categories listed above. CIRM funding for these project will be up to $10 million.

About CIRM CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided $3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 156 research and facility grants totaling more than $260 million, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human embryonic stem cell research in the world. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov

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